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V. THE WHITE GOD AND OTHER POEMS. *By Thomas Caldecot Chubb.*

VI. WHERE LILITH DANCES. *By Darl Macleod Boyle.*

Where Lilith Dances

DARL MACLEOD BOYLE

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TO MY MOTHER:

Before mine eyes had seen the light of day,
Or that my soul had come from Heaven's great King,
A harmless, tiny, helpless little thing,
You loved me! While my tender being lay
In the soft rose-leaves of your heart at rest,
Like some wee bird within its downy nest,
Beneath the shelter of its mother's wing,
Unborn,—your soul came in my heart to dwell,
Like perfume in the flower, each part to bring
As warmth unto the young bird in its shell,
And built me up to what I was to be,
A semblance of thyself. Thus, being cast
In thy heart's mould, I grew up like to thee:
Thou wert my first friend and wilt be my last!

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PART I

WHERE LILITH DANCES.

[*According to Rabbinical legend, Adam and Lilith, his first wife, quarreled as soon as they were created, as to which should be master. Lilith, in anger at Adam's claim, repeated a spell which gave her wings, and fled to the wild places of the earth. She married Sammael, a fallen Angel, and in conspiracy with him compassed the fall of Adam and Eve by borrowing the form of the Serpent which guarded the gate of Eden, and tempting the woman from the midst of the foliage of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. Hence in old Italian pictures of the Temptation, the Serpent is sometimes represented with a beautiful woman's face. A curse was laid on Lilith that no child of hers should live; and she henceforth had a terrible power over children, who, when they sicken and die, are said to be bewitched by her. She was doomed forever to wander unseen, unloved, alone.*]

I.

WHERE three tall cypresses stand dark
Against a setting sun,
And the shades of night lurk in their leaves
Ere ever the day be done,
And the day-blind bats flit mournful by,
Ere ever the night be won,
And the great white owl, he waits for her
Who comes when the day is done:

II.

Or, in the glade of a mystic wood,
Beneath a midnight sky,
Where the satyrs dance 'neath the strange, gaunt trees,
And the moon looks from on high:
O, the wicked moon, she sees and laughs,
As she passes swiftly by!
But the pale, shy stars turn their eyes away
From the light in Lilith's eye:

III.

For the dead gaunt trees feel their buds break green
When Lilith dances past,
And the little twigs all shake with joy
And whisper soft "At last!"
And the little night-flowers smile and sigh,
For the morning cometh fast;
And the holy stars had no peace in heaven
Saw they her gliding past!

IV.

O, the weird white mistletoe bends from the oak,
As she danceth beneath the trees,
And the perfume of dark night-flowers creeps out
And hangs on the trembling breeze,
And the dim red poppy, whose name is Dream,
Longs for her flowing hair,
And the great white poppy of dreamless sleep
Droops over Lilith's lair,
But the wine-dark poppy, whose gift is Death,
Stands lone in the chill night air!

V.

Or, in a storm-vext mountain pass
By the torrents' shuddering foam,
She danceth with the lonely winds,
And the clouds that know no home;
Content, remembering Lilith's face,
Round the round world to roam!

VI.

And by the side of a reedy stream,
On a white dream-night in June,
When reed and iris whisper soft
Their secrets to the moon,
Her feet keep time to the pipes of Pan,
As he plays a mystic tune,
And the young wind wakes before the dawn,
The dawn that breaks too soon.

VII.

Or, ofttimes through a little town
Built long and long ago,
She glides adown the grass-grown ways,
Beneath the full moon's glow.
O the moon gleams red o'er the ancient town,
And Lilith passes slow!

VIII.

Or in some antique garden strays,
Beneath a hedge of yew,
And from the rich red roses shakes
The treasures of the dew;
But she goes not nigh the lilies tall,
The Virgin's lilies white,
For Lilith loves not Mary's flower,
Gift of the Angel bright:
She loves the poppy whose name is Sleep,
And the deadly flowers of night.

IX.

Or where the weird white hawthorn makes
A glimmer in the night,
And all the trees are dreaming deep
Bathed in the chill moonlight,
'Tis there and then that Lilith meets
The spirits of the night;

X.

In the dim, haunted vale they dance
Beside the pools of sleep,
But they go not up the mountain side
That rises grey and steep,
For there the lonely rowan trees
Their holy vigil keep.

XI.

Or, when the first faint flush of dawn
Tinges the desert sands,
And the desert, like a mighty sea,

Stretches to distant lands,
Ere ever the sun has risen yet,
For a moment's space she stands.

XII.

Or on the waves of the foaming sea
She dances through the night,
And rides through the mist and the dashing spray,
On the great wave-crests of white.
She sports with sea-maids on the sands,
Beside the moaning waves,
And the sea-flowers quiver and cling to her
As she glides through ocean-caves,
And the lonely sailor hears her song
Rise through the surging waves.

XIII.

Oft in the dreaming meadows,
When children are at play,
Beside the flower-twined hedgerow,
At the dim close of day,
Poor childless Lilith beckons,
And bids the children stay,
But at one glance from Lilith's eyes
Their white souls flee away!

XIV.

And mortal man who sees her dance,
By wood or lake or shore,
Will roam the world for love of her,
Nor knows he joyance more,
And he who heareth Lilith sing
Will ne'er be as before.

XV.

For in her song are youth and age,
Evening, the sea-waves' knell,
And storm, and death, and moonlit skies,
And thoughts that none may tell,
And he who hears can ne'er have peace,
Through Earth and Heaven and Hell!

ERE THE YEARS NUMBERED NINE.

In the lang, lang syne,
When the world was a toy,
Ere the years numbered nine,
I remember one joy:
'Twas to rise in the grey
Of a white winter's morn
When the low sun's red ray
Made the world forlorn,
To see on the pane
The magic Jack Frost
Had wrought once again,
And in silver embossed:

Strange seas of white spray,
That fell not nor rose;
White trees that ne'er sway
In a wind that ne'er blows;
Silver streams 'mong the hills
Of a far silver moon;
White noonday that chills,
White skies in a swoon.

Since then I have seen
Snowy range upon range
Lift its far head serene,
Vast, kingly and strange;
White sea-waves that froze
Before they could fall,
Flush of soft sunset rose
On the high snowy wall,
Mountain-clouds in the noon,
Dim, mocking the sight,
And where the white moon
Walked alone on the height;
Yet these sights never moved
Nor made my heart fain
As the grey dawns I loved,
And the frosts on the pane!

Strange seas of white spray,
That fell not nor rose;
White trees that ne'er sway
In a wind that ne'er blows;
Silver streams 'mong the hills
Of a far silver moon;
White noonday that chills,
White skies in a swoon.

But that was lang syne,
When the world was a toy,
Ere the years numbered nine,
When to live was a joy!

THE CAVE OF BETHLEHEM.

"The ox knoweth his owner, and the ass his master's crib."

I. The Ox.

THAT nicht the Bairnie lay
'Mang the sweet-smellin' hay,
His young een dazed wi' kings an' a' their sheen;
His heid He turnèd roon',
An' ower Him bendin' doon,
There lookit intae His twa saft broon een.

He reached His wee han's oot
Tae the big gentle brute,
The wee face smiled intae the big broon een;
Fu' low the great heid bent,
As gin fu' weel he kent
Wha 'twas had come tae cure the beasties' teen!

II. The Ass.

They crooded a' the wee low cave,
Great shinin' kings wi' mony a slave,
Frae oot the gowden East,
Horses o' war an' camels great,
Harnessed in a' the pride o' state,
An' mony a huntin' beast.
The Bairnie looked them up an' doon,
An' careless was His ee;
Then slow His heid He turnèd roon',
An' looked an' smiled at me.
Some day—wha kens?—a King may ride
Fu' lowly doon the mountain side,
Tae auld Jerus'lem toon;
An' croods will cheer an' wave their palms,
An' fill the air wi' David's psalms,
An' fling their garments doon.
Ane o' ma tribe for Him that day
Will wait whaur twa roads meet,
Tae bear Him doon the mountain way,
An' up the city street!

HAIRST.

I'M but a puir bit lassie,
An' when the day's wark's dune,
I wander ower the heather hill
Tae watch the settin' sun;
But O, it's nae the sunset,
But a bluid-red field I see:
An' O, ma bonnie laddie
In the Laigh Countree!

Noo silent is the hairst field,
Wi' twa'r three woman folk,
Fu' weary bend the warkers,
Nae laugh nor daff nor talk;
An' I see anither hairst field,
Whaur the sheaves lie silently:
An' O, ma bonnie laddie
In the Laigh Countree!

Aneath the roon, red hairst moon
I gang ma lee alane;
There's mony a ane that's strong and hale
Will never see it wane.
I wonder what it's lookin' on
Far, far across the sea,
An' O, ma bonnie laddie
In the Laigh Countree!

But O, I wadna hae him here,
For a' ma heart's sae sair;
Whaur should he be but whaur he is,
Should I ne'er see him mair?
Wha wants a cooard for a lad?
'Twere better far tae dee;
But O, ma bonnie laddie
In the Laigh Countree!

HUSH AN' A HUSH.

HUSH, an' a hush, ma bonnie wee laddie,
Daddy's awa, an' awa, tae the war;
Daddy's ne'er seen his gowden-haired laddie,
An' noo he's awa sae far, an' sae far!

Hush, an' a hush, ma bonnie wee laddie,
Daddy is fichtin' for mither an' you;
Soon he'll be hame tae his ain wee bit laddie,
An' bonnie blue een will smile intae blue!

Hush, an' a hush, ma bonnie wee laddie,
What makes ye stare wi' yer bonnie bricht ee?
It's noucht but th' moon glintin' in at the window,
An' Daddy's awa in the Laigh Countrie!

Hush, an' a hush, ma bonnie wee laddie,
Daddy's awa, an' awa, tae the war;
Daddy's ne'er seen his yellow-haired laddie,
An' noo he's awa sae far, an' sae far!

WHAUR THE WINDS BLAW FREE.

O WHA will gang wi' me the day,
An wha will bide at hame?
The waves are ripplin' blithe an' gay,
A' flecked wi' snawy faem;
The sea is sparklin' noo an' still,
But that's no the way for me,
I'm gangin' up the heather hill,
Whaur the winds blaw free!

The lawlan's lie fu' fair tae see,
A' glinten in the sun,
The gowden corn sways bonnily,
The hairst is noo begun;
But we'll gang up the mountain side,
Wi' the bracken tae the knee,
An' there we'll run, an' there we'll ride
Whaur the winds blaw free!

Wi' the kindly heather 'neath oor feet,
The blue lift owerheid,
We'll hae nae thocht o' the city street,
O' land or wealth nae need;
For a' the warld oor ain is still,
The earth, the sky, the sea,
When we wander ower the heather hill
Whaur the winds blaw free.

An' when at last gangs doon the sun,
Red in a gowden haze,
We'll tell auld tales o' deeds were dune,
In Scotia's ancient days;
Until the auld heroic dead,
Frae earth an' frae the sea,
Stand there upon the heather hill
Whaur the winds blaw free!

PART II

THE VISION OF GRACE.

I.

I SAID: "It is my due,
Weighed in the balance true
Wherewith God weighs the wages of His Saints.
The soul hath her own pride,
Which will not be denied,
And spurns to beat at Heaven's gate,
Beggared and desperate,
Cringing for her own with cries and plaints.
Put finger on the flaw,
Show me the broken law,
The foot that slipped into the mire of flesh.
When did the world enmesh
Within its golden net
The pilgrim soul
Whose far invisible goal
Beyond the starry galaxy was set?
Therefore it is I spurn
That which I did not earn,
The dole flung to me of a God's mere grace,
And arbitrary favour of His face."

A voice behind me spoke;
Like a whole sea it broke,
And shook from pole to pole
The sureness of my steadfast soul;
"Yea, art thou so complete,
From poised head to conquering feet
No soil of clay in all thy golden frame,
No reft of sin, alloy of blame?
Thou boastest thou dost spurn
Whate'er thou didst not earn;
When didst thou earn the I, the Me?
Whence came the eyes that see,
The mind behind the eyes,
The heart that flushes with surprise
And joy at sunset or sunrise?
The sun, the moon, the stars,

The sea that beats behind its mighty bars,
Alps over alps,
Lifting their snowy crests,
Astrain to gaze across the margin of the world;
Say, when didst thou earn these?
Poor fool! dost thou not feel
'Tis all of Grace—great Nature's wheel,
The earth, the sky, the sea,
Thy very self, the I, the Me?
Now spurn
That which thou didst not earn!"

II.

My pride with torn sail
Bore on against the gale:
"I yield the self—the I, the Me,
I yield the earth, the sky, the sea,
Divinest be the grace by which they came to be!
Self and the world once given,
Why must the Grace of Heaven,
Ungracious, grudge my little human need?
At least, alone I stood;
Sucked not a brother's blood,
Nor hung upon another's gracious deed.
Wherefore, within the round
Of my own human bound,
Still do I spurn
That which I did not earn."

A sudden silence fell,
Then like a silver bell
Floated a music out of far-off years—
A sweet remembered lullaby of smiles and tears,
Fond hopes and trembling fears,
And through the veil of music came
A voice that burnt my heart like flame:
"Ah me, so soon forgot!
Whose was the agony that gave thee life?
A gift thou knewest not.
When thou didst lie upon her breast,

Say, didst thou earn that nest?
Was it as wages of work well done
She fought with bitter Death
Through the dark night till rise of sun,
To save thy failing breath,
And smiled to see her own wan face,
Since thine was ruddy with health's grace?
Did she once pause to ask,
Before she did her task:
'What has he done to merit this?
Has he deserved his mother's kiss?'
Ay, go and say to thy dead mother's face:
'I fling thee back thy grace,
I spurn
That which I did not earn!' "

III.

A face smiled love across the years,
A dear hand beckoned white,
And grief broke in a mist of tears,
And the mist broke into light.
And yet my stubborn pride
Refused to be denied;
"Yea, that dear soul of grace
Smiles in a happy place:
Gladly I owe the unrequited debt.
And yet, and yet—
What do I owe the general race of man,
The generations since the world began?
Wild blood and lawless mind,
And lusts that drive us like a restless wind,
Forever seeking what we shall not find.
I owe them naught;
What is there that I have not bought
With strength of hand and toil of thought?
Knowledge in her circle bright,
Beauty in her sevenfold light,
Prudence with her bit and rein,
Love that counteth loss her gain.

Once more I spurn
That which I did not earn."
Then rose a Voice from out the dust:
"Hast thou forgot the memory of the just?
Dost thou not know
That in man's onward march
Every step with blood is wet
Beneath the heaven's careless arch?
And tears like waters flow,
That the torn flag of truth be set
But one ridge higher in a thousand years.
The prophets are asunder sawn;
The martyrs to the stake are drawn;
A thousand soldiers die
To make a bridge to liberty.
Thy flower of life doth grow
In human dust, watered with human tears.
And thou, forsooth, dost spurn
Whate'er thou didst not earn!
Ah, when wilt thou have grace to learn
That all thy boasted good
Was bought with blood?
That all thy roots are sunk in grace,
The unremembered sorrows of thy race?
A costly price, I trow,
To pay for such as thou!"

IV.

Then rose my pride in wrath:
"'Tis true: the upward path
Is o'er the broken hearts of men.
Their dearest hopes they fling away, and then
For us lie down to die.
But Thou, Most High,
Shar'st not the sacrifice!
Upon Thy throne of ice
Thou sat'st apart
A God of ice; alone, without a heart.
'O rend the heavens and come down!'

Thou gav'st no answer to Thy prophet's cry,
And the indifferent sky
Gave neither smile nor frown.
Ah God, my God, bethink Thee, was it right
To sit in silence on the height?
Did never wave of generous shame
Break o'er Thee and Thy throne,
To be in love so far outdone
By things without a name?"

There fell a sullen hush,
As if in awe of the wild word,
And o'er the world a darkness crept,
And thro' the dark a sudden rush
Of unseen wings was heard.
Then the earth moaned as if it slept
Uneasily, and shuddered in its pain.
Some tragedy unseen
Throbbed like a breaking heart
Behind the awful screen.
Then did the distant edge of heaven dispart
In one long sword of light,
And from a cross there bent a Head;
"My God, my God!" was said;
Dark drops fell down,
As from a thorny crown.
One flash, and Heaven and Earth did pass away;
In flowed the sevenfold day
That beats around the eternal throne.
Angels in wide array
Rank over rank in glory shone,
Upon the throne sat One.
A crown of thorns upon His bended head,
His hands had wounds yet red,
A spear had pierced His heart.
Slowly He spread His hands apart,
Slowly He lifted up His head,
And looked at me. I saw His eyes.
Ah me! those eyes!

THE STRANGER.

Ah, who is the stranger,
With morn in his eyes,
This desperate ranger
Of earth and the skies?

Whose, whose are the fancies
That fly with the moon?
Ah, who is it dances
To the fairy-pipes' tune?

Who is this finds his heaven
In his mother's blue eyes,
Ere the years number seven,
Or the morning star dies?

Ah, who is the stranger
Who never could die,
The scorner of danger?—
Ah, child, was it I?

SHADOWS.

A YEAR ago
One walked with me
Across the snow,
By the bare gaunt tree,
And our shadows passed slow
O'er the bare white lea.

Two shadows cast
By the visiting moon,
Together passed
In the wind's low croon;
The hour went fast
And passed too soon.

One shadow throws
The moon on the lea,
One shadow goes,
That eye cannot see,
Across the snows
Along with me.

A year ago,
O visiting moon,
Two trod the snow
In the wind's low croon;
The Shadows went slow
Yet one passed too soon!

WHEN I AM OLD.

WHEN I am old, and my good days are o'er,
And life and love are less than dreams of dreams,
And my soul sits within the burnt-out core
Of its own ghost, and God Himself but seems:

When, love, you speak, and I know not your name,
And look up dazed, and wonder who you are,
And care no longer if you praise or blame,
Or whether 'twixt us two 'tis peace or war:

Have patience with the unremembering eyes
Which once their love-thirst from your own did slake;
Think how this heart once thought it paradise
To burn itself to ashes for your sake!

ALL SOULS' EVE.

THE evening is dark, and the sky is misty, and the wind blows low;
O wind, cease swaying the bare, bare branches, bending them to and fro,
They look too like ghosts in the pale moonlight,
Ah, too like ghosts in the dusky night,
When ghosts glide to and fro!

O ghosts not laid, and ghosts forgotten, and ghosts of the evil dead,
Why will ye come to sear my heart, when I thought ye had gone, had fled,
Why do ye come on this night of the year,
Does it ease your pain to behold my fear,
Since all is done and said?

THE MOTHER OF US ALL.

MAKE her an image of the pendent world,
A living mirror of the living whole;
Be Time and Space within her heart upcurled,
Then set Eternity within her soul.

Break, break, on every shore, ye homeless waves,
Lifted by moon and driven by the wind,
White on the sky-line, dark in ocean caves,
Playing on sands, when sun and breeze are kind.

Let there rise mountains of fire and snow,
Majestic rivers fed by lonely rills,
Mysterious forests man may never know,
Vales where the moon walks naked on the hills.

Wide fields be there, with poppies in the wheat,
And, for delight, a little garden plot,—
Lilies and roses asleep in the noon heat,—
White moons of daisies, pansies dark for thought;

High over all, within the soul's pure sky,
Sun, moon and stars, eternal and divine,
In the dark of midnight, or when the noon is high,
Rising for a wonder, setting for a sign.

Let all sweet sounds make music in her blood,
The pipes of Pan, and every wild bird's tune,
All voices of the sea and mountain flood,
And every wind that roves 'neath sun and moon.

Make her an image of the pendent world,
A living mirror of the living whole;
Be Time and Space within her heart upcurled,
Then set Eternity within her soul!

THE IRISH WAKE.

She opened the door of the dead,
And the silence received her,
Folded her in
Away from the jest and the weeping
That seemed to mock one another
Around the white face within—
The young girl-face, so quiet,
Aloof from it all,
Done now with laughter and tears forever,
Her dear companion and friend.

The silence folded her in,
The white silence of dawn,
One star still in the sky,
Tremulous, dim,
Beginning to die too in the white spaces.
With a sudden throb of the heart
She thought of her lover:
Ah God! It might have been himself,—
Herself,—lying there within
On the bed white and still!
And the young blood broke through her grief
And triumphed o'er death,
In joy that they still were alive,
And before them a world of love!

She lifted her eyes;
The star was gone,
But the dawn was now full.
And ev'n as her eyes fell,
Fell also her doom.
She saw him stand
Under the hawthorn in the dim lane;
White like a ghost in the dawn
Was the flower of the thorn;
Whiter his face.
She saw in the depth of his eyes
The misery hopeless and wan,

And in one desolate flash
She knew it all,
And envied the still heart within
Both Love and Death!
Dear God, that she were lying there
Instead, safe from the heartache!
She had been so glad to be alive, alive,
And now—O Jesus, gentle Jesus,
Plead, plead with God to let her die!

The sun rose o'er the mountain's rim
And smote her in the face,
And a new world began.

THE CURTAIN.

LIKE some seraglio of an Eastern king,
Secret and screened from gaze of prying eyes,
So is the soul of many a friend we know.
And as some gazer hidden 'mong the palms,
In some fair garden by the water, sees
A dark Sultana for a moment stand,
Dreaming, behind the casement curtain-folds,
The red gold gleaming on her dusky brow:
The hidden beauty for a moment stands,
And gazes, dreaming, from some well-known eyes.

PRIMROSES.

Grow pale, ye primroses,
Grow ye very pale,
For he is paler still.
Strew far and wide your petals,
Dim, soft petals,
Over the little hill!

Grow pale, ye primroses,
Grow, grow ye very pale,
For he is paler still.
And be your sweet eyes dim
With tears remembering him!

Remember, dear primroses,
How he would wander here,
And welcome your soft posies
In the springtime of the year.
And how the little foot would tread
Gently lest it press your head;
He would not gather primroses
Upon the little hill.
"They would be hurt," he said.
So grow ye pale, primroses,
For he is paler still,
And be your sweet eyes dim
With tears remembering him!

Grow pale, ye primroses,
Grow ye very pale,
For one who's paler still
With eyes more dim,
Knows not where he reposes,
On some far distant hill,
Or down some shady vale;
And tell your sister-posies
Each springtime of the year
To spread their petals pale
With gentle touch o'er him

Who now is paler still.
Let one small dewdrop tear
Your sweet eyes dim
From dawn till daylight closes
For one with eyes more dim,
With tears remembering him!

THE CHURCH OF KNOCKE.

I stood, a stranger,
Indifferent, critical, curious,
Born of an alien faith,
Watching the farm folk,
Field-delvers, herdsmen,
Gather to worship
Their fellow-toiler,
The Carpenter—
Crucified.

'Twas past dawn scarce an hour.
In my own distant land,
This morn of the Sabbath,
The folk of my faith
Still were sleeping
The sleep of the just,
And their Lord,
The Crucified,
Awaited their leisure;
And these, while still it is dark,
Arise and haste onward
Thro' the chill morning winds
To meet with their Lord
At the dim holy hour
When He arose in the garden,
And saw the sun rise,
And a new world began.

One came after the rest,
Grey with the dust of the way,
A man of the fields,
Tall and gaunt,
Familiar with toil,
Acquainted with hunger,
His face burnt and marred
As one whom the sun and the winds
Long, long had their will of,
His poor garb decent

To meet with his Lord.
Naught cared he for the stranger,
Indifferent, critical, curious.
Straight to the cross
Affix'd to a pillar,
The great cross where the Christ
Of a man's full stature
Bowed lowly in death.

Before Him he knelt,
Bent the iron-grey head,
As owning his wrongness;
Then, as in a passion,
Swift, sudden, imperious,
He lifted his face
To the marred face above,
And stretched out his arms
Like the arms on the cross
As in some vast appeal
Which may not be gainsaid.

I saw the poor outspread hands,
Gnarled, twisted, scarred,
With wounds of labor:
I saw the twain—
And lo, face to face,
Form to form,
Each answered each,
Above, below!

Swift as he came
He rose and passed
Back to his cross, content.
O Crucified above,
What did he ask—
The crucified below?
Ah, naught, naught for himself,
Ah, surely naught!
Some dear soul climbing up

The cleansing mount;
A son in peril
Far off on unknown seas;
Some daughter,
Light of his lonely eyes,
Treading the downward slope of death;
The land of his birth,
Beneath the dark shadow
Of wings of the vulture,
Man, woman, child,
Unconscious of woe:
These, these he brought,
O Crucified,
And left them here with Thee!

MORNING AND NIGHT.

WHEŃ stooped the white morning
The Red Rose to cull,
He turnèd with scorning
From the place of the Skull.

Night stooped in the gloaming
White poppies to cull;
His soul, it went homing
To the place of the Skull.

THE LATTICE.

WHO is this who looketh forth thro' the lattice,
With glance familiar, yet so strange, so various?
One moment warm as a dear friend's embracing,
Then a veil falls, and lo, cold is the stranger:
Who art thou there lurking behind the lattice,
Ah, who art thou?

Grey were the eyes, as under a grey heaven
A grey sea broodeth, all a-dream and heaveless;
Sudden thro' a rift breaks a happy sunbeam,
A little well of light the grey ensapphires,
All the lattice glows with a flash of laughter:
Ah, sea-grey eyes!

IDEALISM.

And canst thou say, "This sky, that flying cloud,
The sun, the moon, the stars, those worlds unknown,
That mavis' song that rises sweet and loud,
Are but a dream, and I exist alone;
That lovely, blue, unfathomable deep,
These grains of sand which thro' my fingers run,
That clear rock-pool on which the sunbeams sleep,
The flowers that draw their colors from the sun,
Each sound I hear, each lovely melody fraught
With gentle joy, each wild pathetic strain,
And all the worlds of sight and sound are naught
Apart from me—the children of my brain"?
Philosopher, he who unaided can
Imagine these, himself is God, not man!

PART III

"RIGHTEOUSNESS AND PEACE HAVE KISSED EACH OTHER."

Be still, sweet Peace, and dry thy burning tears;
I am thy sister War, and love thee well;
Yea, and for love I storm with shot and shell,
And pierce thy soul with wounds and deaths and fears,
And break before thine eyes thy hopes and joys,
Thy silken pleasures and thy gilded toys!

Ah, Peace, where is our elder sister gone—
She, the true heir and queen of all our realm?
'Tis for her sake that thus I overwhelm
Thy fair prosperities, lest Hell should yawn.
Recall our exiled sister from distress,
Kiss her pure lips: her name is Righteousness!

MAKERS OF HEROES.

O Mons and Charleroi,
War of the Rivers,
Makers of Heroes!

Yesterday common dust,
Clay like the rest of us,
Sons of mere mortals—
Craftsmen and fishermen,
Shepherds and laborers,
Shopkeepers, artisans—
To-day, sons of Gods,
Comrades of heroes,
Perseus and his peers,
Slayers of monsters:
Stars in the firmament,
Clear shining for ever!

And some—ah, unfortunate!
Fettered like beasts
To browse in the field:
One, alas, by the years,
And one by his home,
And one by the greed of the world,
And one by death's fears.
So they amble inglorious
By street car and train
To office and counters,
Flat of the city
Or burrow suburban:
Squirrels in cages,
Whirling for naught!

O Mons and Charleroi,
War of the Rivers,
Makers of Heroes!

THE ANGELS OF MONS.

WHAT is this tale of angels in a vision,
Bowmen that hovered o'er our broken host?
What is this sound of laughter and derision,
As when one speaks at noonday of a ghost?

Say that the myth was formed from out the dreaming
Of one who wrought it for his daily bread:
Ah, none the less, be sure it was the streaming
Of light of Heaven thro' the heart and head!

When gather principality and power,
And spiritual wickedness in places high;
When the World-Rulers of this darkness lower
In one last tempest, to triumph or to die;

When Armageddon all the world inherits,
Dark legacy of people, King, and Priest;
When issue, like to frogs, the unclean spirits
From the false Prophet, the Dragon, and the Beast:*

Think ye 'tis credible that God, uncaring,
Sits in His heaven smiling at the psalms?
Think ye His angels, neutral and undaring,
Too proud to fight, can only wave their palms?

Maketh He not His angels fires of flaming,
Yea, and His ministers a rushing wind,
Sodom to burn for terror and for shaming,
The corners of the world to loose and bind?

Is it not writ that Michael to their prison
Hurled down the rebels, and bound them with a chain?
If the Black Horde have now once more arisen,
Shall not the same spear thrust them down again?

Angels at Mons?—And thinkest thou there solely
Front they the princes and powers of the air?

* Revelation XVI: 12-16.

Nay, from the lowest Hell thro' all the heavens holy,
Fight they the Serpent, nor ever know despair!

War in the compass of a drop of water,
War in the ebb and flow of thine own blood;
The Darkness and the Light arrayed for slaughter
In every atom of the eternal flood!

Ask art thou worthy of the shining vision,
As when the prophets opened the young eyes,
Showed on the mount the burning apparition,
Horses and chariots of fire from the skies?

Blessed who see not, and who yet believe it,
Winning assurance where the sense is numb.
Virtues and powers of the soul perceive it,
Bow down in worship, and with joy are dumb!

Blest who believe, and need no nerve of seeing;
Well may they fight, who never fight alone:
Army on army of the Heavens in being,
And, Himself wounded, the Captain on the Throne!

POLAND, 1915.

[NOTE: "*Picture this land, always melancholy, desolate, and poor, given over to the destroyer. Across its steppes, at this season of the year parched by the scorching summer sun, the dust is blowing up before a hot wind in choking clouds. And realize, if possible, that this dust, which covers everything with a grey mantle, is the dust of that which was living humanity this time last year.*"—FORTNIGHTLY REVIEW, September, 1915.]

AH! what is this dust
That dims the sunshine,
And falls, a grey rust,
Upon poplar and pine
And the steppes' burnt crust,
To their last confine—
This grey darkening dust
That dims the sky-line?

Last year, ah me!
It could laugh and weep;
A child climbed its knee,
On its breast fell asleep;
It ploughed the low lea,
To sow and to reap—
Last year, ah me!

O wandering dust,
Without rest in the grave!
O dim grey rust,
'Twas but little to crave
In the steppes' burnt crust
A home in the grave,
'Gainst the wandering lust
Of the wild wind's wave!

THE RED REAPER.

'Tis the Red Reaper! He casts his blood-red shadow
Across the autumnal beauty of the world;
Dark moves his scythe o'er mountain and o'er meadow
Like banner of the King of Hell unfurled.

Pensive and sweet it was to see the turning,
In happy years, of green leaves into red;
The autumn woodland now seems but the burning
Of town and village and deserted dead.

Gone is the joy we had in the sun-setting,
Islands of fire in the golden deeps;
Now it burns memories beyond forgetting,
Red fields afire o'er which the red scythe sweeps.

Oh, nevermore we'll watch the great moon throwing
The harvest fields into a happy trance!
Henceforth its light will cast the shadow mowing
Dark swathes on fields of Flanders and of France!

THE DEAD DEATH'S-HEAD HUSSAR.

THOU madest Death thy Lord and King,
His head thy sign;
Now with his grim unchanging smile
He plays with thine.

This morn thou rod'st, the "Wacht am Rhein"
Thy lips upon;
To-night thy watch is on the banks
Of Acheron.

AS IT WERE A SEA OF GLASS MINGLED WITH FIRE.

Oft at the hour of the sun's downgoing,
Saw he the dead world laid upon a pyre,
Westward from Patmos the mystic heavens glowing,
Waters that were wild, and waves that were afire.

Loud in his ears, a sound of many waters,
Echoed the peoples, their tumults and their din,
Rumours of their wars and tempests of their slaughters,
And thro' the waves smote the fires of their sin!

Then in a moment the tumult of the nations
Hushed was and stilled into a glassy sea,
As once the Voice that moves the constellations
Calmed waves and winds on the Lake of Galilee.

Lo, in the depths a rapture and a wonder!
The fire still burning in the centre of its peace;
In the new heavens, ah, what can ever sunder
The crystal and the fire until the heavens cease?

Wilt thou not still the raging of the nations,
Calm their wild waves by sin and passion blown,
Mingle the fire of all the generations
With seas of glass outspread before thy throne?

TO THE FALLEN OF THE NATIONS.

YEA, let us praise them, for they have made payment
To the last penny of the long account;
Yea, to the Mother rendered back the raiment,
Respired the spirit to the Eternal Fount!

Once built they shrines for sweet belovèd faces,
Shining in fancy—secret in the heart,
Wandered and worshipped within lonely places,
Held within the world a world apart.

Once joy, bright-winged, would wake them from their sleeping,
Or some dear grief lie down with them at night;
Once Hope and Fear would hold them in their keeping,
Mirror all changes of the dark and light.

Then came the end of loving and of choosing:
Slow, slow, or at a step, they reached the goal—
The silver cord's long tedious unloosing,
The sudden breaking of the golden bowl.

Souls that for crown once asked the pleiads seven
Claim now not e'en one low last faltering breath;
Six feet of clay content them for a heaven,
Low in the last humility of death.

Yea, let us praise them, for they have made payment
To the last penny of the long account;
Yea, to the Mother rendered back the raiment,
Respired the spirit to the Eternal Fount!

STRENGTHEN US NOW!

THE young men see visions,
And the old men dream dreams,
And the sun stands still in the heavens
To watch the swaying strife,
And at night the moon is pale!

O Thou to whom a thousand years are as a day,
And a day as a thousand years,
Strengthen us now!
For a day is more than a thousand years gone by.
We were torn with dissensions and strife,
With wrongs, injustices, fears;
But now the dawn is breaking,
The shadows of night are fleeing away,
The dark clouds melt before the sun,
And the air is clear in the blue wide spaces,
And voices speak in the winds,
And a spirit breathes forth from the mountains
And the uttermost parts of the earth.
The moon by night holds her breath,
The stars grow pale to see the conflict,
And the sun stands still in the sky!

The dead of the Nations are watching
From the ramparts of the past.

O Thou to whom a thousand years are as a day,
And a day as a thousand years,
Strengthen us now!

ONWARD YE GO.

ONWARD ye go, our brave lads, in your marching,
Loud beat the drums, keep ye time with your feet,
Lift up your heads to the grey sky o'erarching,
Take one last look at the grey city street.

Your all and all ye heaped upon the altar,
Flung to war's flame your being—life and limb;
Of less or more ye would not stoop to palter,
Poured out the wine-cup running o'er the brim.

Youth with its joys of living and of loving
All that you were and all you were to be,
Longings that brood, and hopes that go a-roving,
All sacrificed for the dear country!

We who abide within the old grey city
The old round treading 'neath the old grey skies,
Think ye we wrong you with one thought of pity?
Nay, nay, dear hearts, we are too sad and wise.

Is it not written for the soul's slow learning,
When the burnt offerings began to smoke,
Lo, the Lord's song went upward in the burning,
Lo, the priest's trumpets into triumph broke?

Yea, and we too, altho' we shrink and falter,
Raise the Lord's song, albeit sad and slow;
Yea, through the smoke and flaming of the altar,
Triumph the trumpets—for we let you go!

So on ye go, our brave lads, in your marching,
To the loud drums beat ye time with your feet,
Lift up your heads to the grey sky o'erarching,
Take one long look at the grey city street!

DULCE ET DECORUM.

Pity them not, 'tis we who need your pity,
We with weak hands who cannot fight nor die,
We who must live and see no Shining City
Flash from the gun-rent spaces of the sky.

All that are women, be they maids or mothers,
Have but a waiting till the end be won;
Not theirs to fight with fathers and with brothers,
Not theirs to strive for husband or for son.

Men that are old, that cower above the embers
Of their dead selves, and dream upon the past,
Each in the tired sad soul and heart remembers
Once he had dreamed that youth and strength must last.

Then had he marched into the high emprising,
Fearing nor man nor death nor any pain,
Hearing the bugle and the swift uprising
Of men and nations, lest the evil gain.

Men that are young, but whom the gods, unkinder,
Granted not strength, although their souls be brave,
To them each deed of glory is reminder,
Weak, without glory, they must seek the grave.

Yea, for our years may drag on in derision,
To grey old age and wintry setting sun;
Not ours to see the glory and the vision,
Not with our lives the victory is won.

Better, far better, yea, in youth's fair morning,
While life's high sun is shining in the sky,
And with its gold the far blue hills adorning,
In one swift flame of sacrifice to die!

THE NIGHT WIND.

OUT in the dark sad night the wind seems fretting,
Like a sick child in pain,
As if his soul were all forgetting
The spring's soft rain.

Not as some fair girl's happy weeping,
Like April's sunny showers,
The sky, a breaking heart, when earth is sleeping,
Weeps through the hours.

Say, does the wind remember the young faces
On which he loved to blow?
And does the night-cloud think of those far places,
Where they lie low?

Grieve not! 'twas that free wind and that wide heaven,
Their mountains and their sea,
That made them men; now they their lives have given
To keep these free!

A BLIND SOLDIER.

I.

I HALTED in the path
The better to drink in
Each blessed sight and sound
Above, below, around.
The golden sun of June
In the high hour of noon
Filled like a cup the little lake
With golden wine.
I heard the murmur of a distant stream;
Somewhere beyond my utmost gaze
I heard a lark upraise
Its throbbing song of love and praise;

Full of the joy I turned,
And saw him standing there,
And on a sudden burned
A flame of shame that I had found
The world so glad and fair.
He turned his eyes around,
Poor sightless eyes, as if still unaware
They could not see,
Then raised them to the sunlit air,
And gazed in silence long
There where the lark poured forth his song.

Then the head dropped upon his breast;
He reached a groping helpless hand
In silent quest
Of her who led him thro' the land—
Sister, or more, I cannot say—
They passed—and as they went I heard
The unseen bird: its gladness smote
My heart. I turned my eyes away;
The grief climbed in my throat:
I let them go, and could not speak a word!

It vexes me to think I could not speak—
The poor face looked so sad and meek,
Oft yet I see it in the sunlit air,
And wonder why he stood so rooted there,
With face uplifted to the sky.
Just so, perhaps—for who can tell?—
Into some sudden lull of fight
Upon the banks of Marne or Aisne,
A lark's song fell,
And as he raised his eyes, the shell
Burst, and never again,
O nevermore,
Will he hear the soaring lark
Sing in that new strange inner dark;
But that last look upon the skies
Will lighten the poor darkened eyes,
Until even that light dies—
And yet I could not stir or speak,
The young face looked so sad and meek.

II.

This was, perchance, his boyhood home,
And when he stood there on the path
Did the song fling on memory's wall
Behind the darkened eyes,
With poignant bitter joy,
The dear familiar hills and lakes and skies,
Moors where the curlew cries,
The leap of brown white waterfalls,
And all the world he roamed in when a boy?
And now—'twas gone, 'twas gone!
And he—ah, he might wander on and on
For fifty darkened years
Thro' other hopes and other fears,
And never see the morning rise,
Or the sun sink into the western skies
Or any glance of sweet beloved eyes!

And I—ah me—forgetful of the cost
At which the world was lost,
And saved to me,
Was glad it was so fair to see!
No marvel if my conscience smote
My heart, and smarts it still,
For those blind eyes 'twixt hill and hill.
And still the grief climbs in my throat
To think I could not speak,
The poor face looked so sad and meek!

RUSSIA.

I.

Ah, Sleeper of the Ages, who stirrest thy limbs and out-moanest,
Speaking strange words from the dark broken heart of thy dreamings,
Why on the steppes lies thy body under the sun and the moonlight,
Thy hair, white with sorrow, out-spread 'neath the stars of the Nor'land,
Thy feet in the sea-waves where Jason for the Golden Fleece went a-questing?

II.

Ah, Sleeper of the Ages, thy years are the years of a woman,
Yet thy face is the face of a child, who knows not why it is chidden,
Thrust forth from the household of nations, a waif and an outcast,
Watching her sisters afar as they pass in the pride of their glory,
Sobbing her lone heart to sleep, yet in dreams rememb'ring her weeping!

III.

Ah, Sleeper of the Ages, what passeth beneath the dark eyelids?
Art thou as one in a dream who meets ever and aye his own footsteps?
Or as a traveller on the white steppes and thro' an infinite forest
Heareth the howl of the wolves, and flees, yet has no power of fleeing?
Or as one pursued for a crime, and the crime is to dream of freedom?

IV.

Ah, Sleeper of the Ages, when thou turnest thy face to the westward,
The soul of thy fathers still draweth thee back to the sunrise;
When thou laughest low, in thy sleep, behold, with a child thou art playing,
And when thou weepest, 'tis not for thyself thou art weeping;
The tears on thy cheek are the tears of a race and a world all mortal!

V.

Ah, Sleeper of the Ages, who smilest so sad in thy dreaming,
Thou hearest the song of the Mother, sweet, vast, and tumultuous,
Voices of women and children, the march of the men and the movements,
Winds in the reeds of the marshes, the moan of the storm in the forests,
And, under the murmur of streams, lo, the sound of the tears of the Maker!

VI.

Now, Sleeper of the Ages, thou stretchest thy limbs and awakest;
Wilt thou turn thine eyes to the sunrise, the home of thy fathers?
Wilt thou march in the highway that opens out to the westward?
Nay, say to thy soul, I will dwell in my land of the steppes and the forests:
Yet will I free my heart with the sea and the voice of its waters!

"MY GOD FORBID IT ME."

(I Chron. XI: 15-19.)

I.

A SUDDEN mist of unshed tears
Blinded the outlaw's eyes;
Over the hills and far away
Across the haunted years,
He saw in lands of memory
The little upland town arise,
The downs o'er which he wandered with his sheep,
And learned the shepherd-care
'Gainst raids of lion and bear.
Once more he saw the pastures of green grass
Where he would make his tired flocks to lie;
The waters still
That flowed 'twixt hill and hill
Glanced on the inner eye;
Once more he walked the dark fierce pass,
And held his breath
As 'twere the Valley of the Shades of Death,
Yet all the more with staff and rod
Before them trod,
And guarded the poor helpless sheep
Through shadows black and deep,
And learned the shepherd-care of God!

"O for a draught of water from the well
Beside the gate!" The longing fell
Unconscious from his lips. Three heard,
Broke thro' the Philistines with spear and sword,
And from the well of youth
Brought water for his drouth.
Amazed, the outlaw stood,
That men should jeopard life and limb,
At a mere thoughtless word,
For love of him;
"My God forbid that I should drink men's blood!"
He poured the water out unto the Lord.

II.

Ah me, until our latest breath,
We must drink draughts of blood and death!
Never a cup of water from the well,
Nor crust of daily bread,
Nor breeze that freshens over hill and dell,
Nor journeying sun from east to west,
Nor daily task, nor nightly rest,
Nor home and love and child and wife,
Nor freedom to hold up the head,
And live our life,—
But is a draught of water from the dead,
The loving-cup of blood
From hearts that lie in the last trance,
Yonder, in fields of Flanders and of France!
And we—ah, here's our test!—
Say, shall we drink it down and laugh and jest,
Or pour it out upon their native sod,
An offering to their God?

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